

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of providing advertising to a subscriber through a set top communications box connected to a television, the set top communications box having a connection to a global computer network, the method comprising:

storing advertising icons and associated advertising information on a server connected to the global computer network;

wherein the advertising icons are each representative of a company or product;

transmitting the advertising icons and associated advertising information to the set top communications box via the global computer network;

displaying an advertising icon overlaying television programming on the television screen using the set top communications box and wherein the displayed advertising icon is not integrated with an electronic program guide;

wherein the advertising information associated with the displayed advertising icon is targeted based on information of the subscriber;

detecting an input signal indicating that the displayed advertising icon has been selected with an input device for the set top communications box;

retrieving the advertising information associated with the selected advertising icon with the set top communications box after detecting that the advertising icon was selected; and

displaying the advertising information on the television screen with the set top communications box.

2. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein displaying the advertising information comprises reformatting a television program

shown on the television screen and displaying the advertising information in a distinct frame on the television screen.

3. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 2, wherein displaying the icon comprises superimposing a semi-transparent icon over the television program being displayed on the television screen.

4. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 3, further comprising displaying a second icon on the television screen in place of a first icon if no input signal is detected for a fixed period of time.

5. (Original) A method according to claim 4, wherein the fixed period is between 1 minute and 5 minutes after the icon is first displayed.

6. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 5, wherein transmitting the icons and associated advertising information comprises transmitting the icons to a memory in the set top communications box for display on the television screen and in response to said detecting the input signal indicating that the icon has been selected, transmitting a request for the associated advertising information with the set top communications box.

7. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 1, further comprising displaying the associated advertising information in place of the television program being displayed.

8. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein transmitting the icons and associated advertising information comprises transmitting the icons to a memory in the set top communications box for display on the television screen and in response to said detecting the input signal indicating that the icon has been selected, transmitting a request for the associated advertising information with the set top communications box.

9. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 1, further comprising displaying a second icon on the television screen in place of a first icon if no input signal is detected for a fixed period of time.

10. (Original) A method according to claim 9, wherein the fixed period is between 1 minute and 5 minutes after the icon is first displayed.

11. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein displaying the icon comprises superimposing a semi-transparent icon over the television program being displayed on the television screen.

12 – 17. (Cancelled)

18. (Currently amended) A method of providing advertising information to a subscriber through a set-top box connected to a television, the method comprising:

downloading by a set-top box an advertising icon from an advertising server through the Internet;

wherein the advertising icon is representative of a company or product;

downloading by the set-top box an advertising information associated with the advertising icon from the advertising server through the Internet;

displaying by the set-top box a television program on a television screen ~~and the downloaded advertising icon on the television screen at the same time;~~

displaying the downloaded advertising icon overlaying the television program on the television screen using the set top box and wherein the displayed advertising icon is not integrated with an electronic program guide;

wherein the advertising information associated with the displayed icon is targeted based on information of the subscriber;

receiving through an input device for the set-top box a user selection of the displayed icon; and

displaying by the set-top box the advertising information associated with the selected icon on the television screen.

19. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 18, wherein:
the icon has an associated link pointing to the associated advertising information; and

the step of downloading by the set-top box an advertising icon includes requesting a download of the associated advertising information from the advertising server using the associated link when the user has selected the displayed icon.

20. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 18, wherein the step of downloading by the set-top box an advertising icon includes:
after the user selection is received, requesting a download of the associated advertising information from the advertising server; and
receiving the requested advertising information by the set-top box.

21. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 18, wherein displaying the advertising information includes displaying the television program being displayed on the television screen in a first frame and displaying the advertising information in a second frame different from the first frame.

22. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 18, further comprising displaying a different icon on the television screen when no user selection is received for a selected period of time.

23. (Currently amended) A set-top box for displaying television programs and user-selected advertising information comprising:
a modem connected to the Internet and operable to communicate with an advertising server through the Internet;
a user input device operable to receive user input; and

a processor connected to the modem and the user input device, and operable to:

download through the modem an advertising icon and an advertising information associated with the advertising icon from the advertising server through the Internet, wherein the advertising icon is representative of a company or product;

display a television program on a television screen ~~and the downloaded advertising icon on the television screen at the same time,~~

display the advertising icon overlaying the television program on the television screen and wherein the displayed advertising icon is not integrated with an electronic program guide;

wherein the advertising information associated with the displayed icon is targeted based on information of the subscriber;

receive through the input device a user selection of the displayed advertising icon, and

display the advertising information associated with the selected advertising icon on the television screen.

24. (Previously presented) The set-top box according to claim 23, wherein after the user selection is received from the input device, the processor requests a download of the associated advertising information from the advertising server and receives the requested advertising information for display on the television screen.

25. (Previously presented) The set-top box according to claim 23, wherein the processor displays the television program on the television screen in a first frame and displays the advertising information in a second frame different from the first frame.

26. (Previously presented) The set-top box according to claim 23, wherein the processor displays a different icon on the television screen when no user selection is received from the input device for a selected period of time.

27. (Previously presented) The set-top box of claim 23, wherein the information of the subscriber comprises location information of the subscriber.

28. (Previously presented) The method of claim 18, wherein the information of the subscriber comprises location information of the subscriber.

29. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the information of the subscriber comprises location information of the subscriber.